

**CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW**

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS  
AND DESIGN GUIDELINES  
FOR  
SMALL-LOT, SINGLE-FAMILY  
DEVELOPMENT**

Updated August 2000

## INTRODUCTION

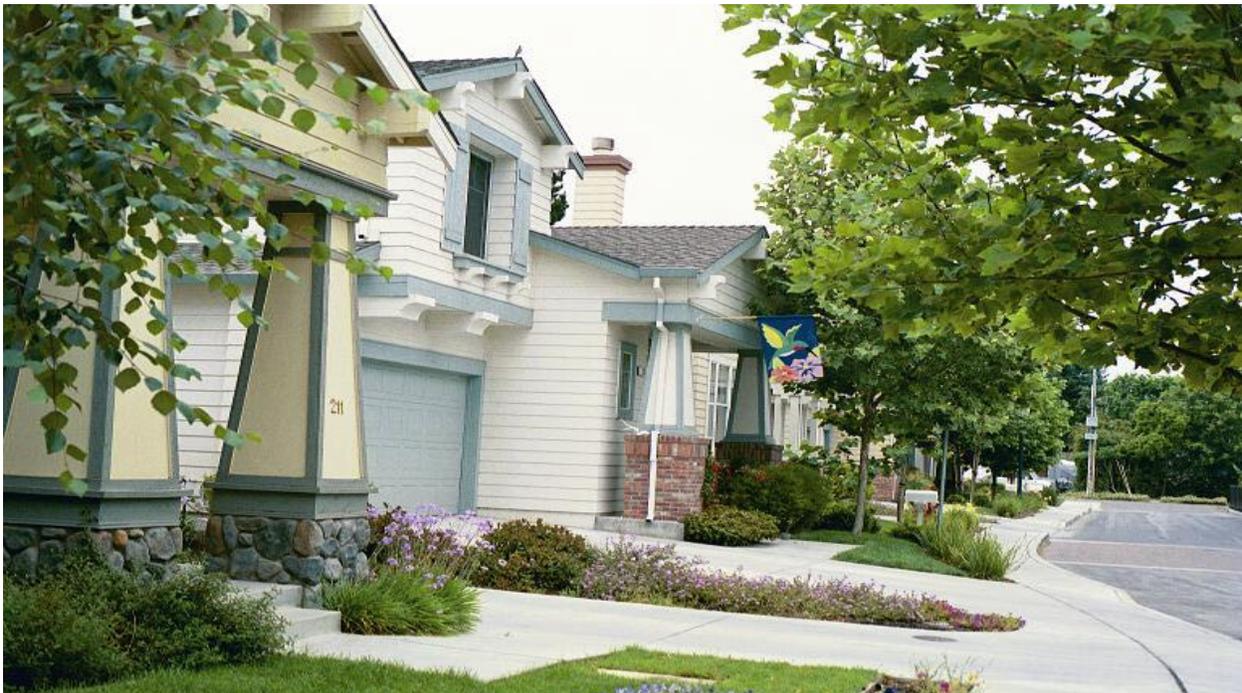
Mountain View is proud of its many different neighborhoods. As these neighborhoods change, steps shall be taken to preserve their special character. The Design Guidelines for Small-Lot, Single-Family Development respond to a new type of residential development in Mountain View. Small-lot, single-family development is similar to traditional single-family neighborhoods that have detached homes with private yards facing common streets, but it is also different. The development sites are smaller infill properties, the densities are higher, the private yards are smaller and the overall effect is more urban than traditional neighborhoods. The Design Guidelines will help assure that this innovative housing will complement and enhance each neighborhood.

Small-lot, single-family development creates a continuum of housing opportunities in Mountain View. With a density

range of 7 to 10 units per acre, it bridges the gap between conventional single-family homes (1 to 6 units per acre) and multiple-family housing, such as townhomes, apartments and condominiums (12 to 33 units per acre).

This new type of housing serves an important need in the community. It provides single-family detached dwellings that are often more affordable than other single-family homes. A small-lot development creates more ownership housing in the community and provides a unique housing resource for young families. Compared to townhomes and condominiums, this housing type provides more privacy and is probably more likely to stay owner-occupied.

Small-lot projects are being built in the City's R2 Single-Family and Two-Family Residential) and R3 Multiple-Family



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Residential) Zoning Districts where higher density housing is permitted and there are still underdeveloped or vacant infill sites. Sometimes the location, shape and size of infill sites make it difficult to build small-lot housing that is well designed and compatible with the surrounding development pattern. The Guidelines are based on a review of 14 small-lot, single-family projects and an analysis of the best design standards for this new type of housing.

### **PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The purpose of the Guidelines is to achieve good-quality residential environments that are beneficial to the surrounding neighborhoods and expand the housing opportunities in Mountain View.

The Guidelines are primarily intended for the small- and medium-size projects within the R2 and R3 Zoning Districts and provide direction and consistency in the review of small-lot, single-family residential development in those districts. They may also serve as a general guide to small-lot, single-family development in precise plan areas.

## 1.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Small-lot, single-family projects require special planning permit approvals due to the unique lot sizes and special development needs. This section summarizes the application process and how the Guidelines will be administered.

### 1.2 APPLICABILITY

1.2.1 These Guidelines apply to any small-lot, single-family developments within the R2 and R3 Zoning Districts. The Guidelines supplement the underlying development standards of these zoning districts and establish additional criteria that will be used by the Zoning Administrator to determine whether permits for the project will be approved or denied.

1.2.2 New small-lot, single-family projects shall adhere to the design standards in these Guidelines unless it can be conclusively demonstrated to the Zoning Administrator that exceptions will result in a project of higher quality and better compatibility.

### 1.3 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

A small-lot, single-family development does not comply with many of the standard zoning requirements of the R2 and R3 Zoning Districts such as minimum lot sizes and building setbacks. As a result, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) permit is required. The PUD allows exceptions to the standard zoning requirements and diversification in the relationships of buildings, streets and open space. It is intended to encourage innovative housing design and

to allow variations for properties with unusual shapes and sizes. In order for the Zoning Administrator to approve a PUD, the following Zoning Ordinance findings must be made:

a. The proposed land use(s) are allowed within the subject Zoning District;

b. The site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of the land use being proposed;

c. The proposed project would be harmonious and compatible with existing and future developments within the Zoning District and surrounding area;

d. The development will constitute a residential environment of sustained desirability and stability and will result in an intensity of land utilization no higher than, and standards of open space no less than, permitted for a similar development within the Zoning District;

e. The approval of the Planned Unit Development Permit for proposed project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);

f. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan;

g. The location, size, design and operating characteristics of the proposed project are not detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience or welfare of the community; and

h. The proposed project is in substantial compliance with the intent of requirements of the applicable Zoning

District and implementation of the proposed harmonious and integrated Planned Unit Development design is superior to standard development in the underlying zone and, therefore, justifies the exceptions to the requirements of this Chapter.

#### 1.4 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Small-lot, single-family projects may be inappropriate in some areas of the R2 and R3 Zoning Districts. In areas with predominantly high-density apartments, small-lot projects can look out of place and disrupt the integrity of the neighborhood. The size and shape of some sites may also make them inappropriate for this housing type. On these difficult sites, townhomes, condominiums or apartments may make more efficient use of the land and be more appropriate for the particular site. To help ensure compatibility and appropriateness, a small-lot, single-family development should comply with the following additional criteria before a PUD is approved by the

Zoning Administrator. Small-lot, single-family developments should be:

a. The best development alternative or at least equal to other development options for the site.

b. Designed with massing and height that is sensitive to the building pattern of the area and adjacent properties.

c. No more than four dwelling units on deep rectangular sites with narrow widths that restrict development to single-loaded alleys.

d. Landscaped and oriented to successfully blend with the streetscape of adjacent properties.

#### 1.5 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

All small-lot, single-family projects shall be reviewed by the City's Development Review Committee (DRC) and Zoning Administrator to assist in achieving quality architecture and site planning. Projects requiring tentative maps are reviewed and approved by the City Council.

#### 1.6 ADMINISTRATION

The Zoning Administrator has the responsibility for interpreting and administering these Guidelines. The Zoning Administrator shall review and monitor the implementation of the Guidelines and recommend modifications, amendments and updates, as appropriate.

## 2.0 SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section contains site development standards that are intended to establish density requirements and coordinate the placement of homes, landscaping, pedestrian pathways and streets within small-lot, single-family developments.

### 2.2 DENSITY AND FLOOR AREA RATIOS

2.2.1 The maximum density for small-lot, single-family development is 10 units per acre unless the underlying density of the zone is more restrictive, in which case the maximum density is designated by the zone and can be fewer than 10 units per acre.

2.2.2 The maximum gross floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.45. Gross FAR is calculated by dividing the gross building area (including garages) by the gross site area (including internal streets and driveways) for the entire project.

### 2.3 COVERAGES

2.3.1 Buildings and structures shall not cover more than 35 percent of the total lot.

2.3.2 Automobile-dedicated paving coverage shall not exceed 25 percent of the total lot, except that a maximum 30 percent of the site may be paved when all the paving exceeding 25 percent of the site area is decorative, permeable pavers.



2.3.3 A minimum of 45 percent of the site shall be open area. Open decks and walkways not attached to driveways count toward open area, but decks and balconies off the second or third floors shall not be credited as open area.

## 2.4 SITE WIDTH

Projects should have a minimum site width of 150' when homes are on both sides of the private street or common driveway and a minimum site width of 90' for homes on only one side. Development on sites with a narrower width may be approved for well-designed, innovative projects that meet all the other standards in these Design Guidelines.

## 2.5 SETBACKS

2.5.1 Units fronting on a public street shall maintain at least a 15' front building setback.

2.5.2 Units fronting on private streets, alleys or driveways shall maintain a minimum 15' front building setback measured from the edge of the curb.

2.5.3 For single-story portions of the house, an average 15' setback and minimum 12' setback shall be maintained around the perimeter of the site (which may be the side or rear yards on individual lots once the site is subdivided). An exception may be made for houses on parcels with frontage on a public street where the Zoning Administrator may approve lesser side setbacks to match the prevailing pattern along the street, as long as the setbacks are not less than 7' for the first story and 15' for the second and third stories. The Zoning Administrator may allow encroachments into the side or rear yard areas for one-story

detached garages. (See Paragraph 2.9 for private yard area requirements.)

2.5.4 For second- and third-story elements, an 18' setback shall be maintained around the perimeter of the site to preserve the privacy of adjacent properties; reduce the appearance of building mass; and avoid tall, sheer walls. The Zoning Administrator may increase the setbacks depending on the proximity and height of buildings on adjacent properties.

2.5.5 The distance between principal structures shall not be less than 10' between buildings. The Zoning Administrator may increase these setbacks, if necessary, to enhance the quality of the space between homes. Zero lot line development is encouraged to maximize the use of this area.

2.5.6 Each unit should have at least one usable side yard between the house and fence to provide outdoor passage between the front and rear yards.

2.5.7 Low outdoor structures (such as decks, stoops, landings, concrete patios and other such architectural features) which do not exceed 18" in height, as measured from the grade, may encroach into any side or rear yard to the property line provided it does not cause drainage onto adjacent properties.

2.5.8 Architectural features attached to the principal structure which are not part of the habitable interior area (such as chimneys, eaves, canopies, cornices and awnings) and architectural features attached to the first floor of the principal structure (such as bay windows, trellises, open porches, patio covers, balconies and decks greater than 18" in height as measured from the grade) may encroach

into required setbacks providing they meet the following limitations:

a. The architectural feature does not come closer than 10' to the rear and side property lines of the original site or closer than 5' to a neighboring structure.

b. The architectural feature encroaches no more than 6' into the front yard setbacks except that open porches may encroach 7' into the front setback areas.

c. Bay windows may encroach a maximum of 3' into the required front and rear setback area and shall not exceed 12' in length or 25 percent of lot width, whichever is less.

## 2.6 HEIGHT

2.6.1 In the R2 Zone, the maximum height is 30'. The Zoning Administrator may approve some architectural elements or roof lines that exceed 30' when it improves the project design.

2.6.2 In the R3 Zone, the Zoning Administrator may approve a building height up to three stories and 45' if buildings of that height and massing are compatible with surrounding development.

## 2.7 PARKING

2.7.1 Two parking spaces shall be provided for each living unit, at least one of which shall be covered. One driveway apron parking space shall be provided in front of each covered parking space.

2.7.2 Guest parking shall be provided at a ratio of .5 parking space per unit. Guest parking spaces shall be open and accessible to everyone, identified as

guest parking and conveniently located on the site.

2.7.3 The minimum parking space dimension for a covered parking space shall be 9' by 20'. The minimum parking space dimension for a guest parking space shall be 8.5' by 18' with a minimum 24' backup area. If the space is angled, the dimension shall be as defined in the parking section of the Zoning Ordinance. For parallel parking spaces, the minimum dimension is 8.5' by 24'. The minimum dimension for a driveway apron parking space is 9' by 20' and garage driveways shall generally not exceed a 1.5 percent grade.

2.7.4 Each unit shall be provided with a minimum 80 square foot private storage area that is large enough to accommodate bulky personal effects such as recreational equipment and should be incorporated as part of the garage. It should generally be accessible from either inside or outside the house.

## 2.8 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Projects should include explicit design consideration of the pedestrian circulation system from the public street to the entries of each home. Sidewalks, a minimum 4' in width, are required in locations where there are homes fronting the driveway whenever six or more units take pedestrian access from a common street or driveway. Rolled curbs are prohibited.

## 2.9 PRIVATE YARDS

Fenced private yard areas shall be provided for each home with a minimum dimension of 15' by 15', except where the setback for the home has been modified to reduce the yard to allow a portion of the house to encroach up to 3' into the setback

area provided that another portion of the setback is increased equal to or greater than the encroaching area. For example, a portion of the house can be set back 12' if an equal portion is set back 18'.

## 2.10 SITE AMENITIES

2.10.1 Large developments (one acre or more) should provide appropriate common areas, such as a tot lot, swimming pool, picnic area, gardens, etc., or a combination of amenities. Tot lots should be fenced. Provide some open space that is highly visible from the street and adds to

the quality of the neighborhood, and provide benches in appropriate areas.

2.10.2 Textured and high-quality paving materials should be utilized to soften the hardscape and accent features such as the driveway entry, pedestrian walkways and individual driveways, and to break up long expanses of pavement.

2.10.3 The arrangement of dwellings should afford a degree of privacy, both internally and to adjacent properties.



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## 3.0 BUILDING DESIGN

### 3.1 ORIENTATION

3.1.1 Individual units should have a presence on the public street or private streets and driveways and not be walled off or oriented inward or have a side or rear elevation facing the street. Living areas with windows and porches should be oriented to the public street or private streets and driveways. Front doors should face the public street.

3.1.2 Second-story window and door locations should be offset from unit to unit to protect privacy.

### 3.2 DESIGN

3.2.1 Building design within the development should be architecturally varied but complementary. Building materials should be compatible with the character of surrounding properties.

3.2.2 Individual units should incorporate design features to assure high-quality, distinctive design and a cohesive variety within the project. Building facades should have offsets and stepbacks, particularly above the first floor, to reduce the appearance of building mass and bulk. Roof elements also should be varied to create a comfortable human scale. Architectural features such as bay windows and porches are encouraged to provide a visually rich environment and an opportunity for neighborhood interaction.

3.2.3 Building materials should be durable, high-quality and consistent throughout the project. Window types,

door types and architectural features (such as trellises, porches and railings) should be consistently applied to each unit within the project. Changes in materials generally should not occur on the same plane as this may result in an insubstantial or artificial quality. Piecemeal and frequent changes in materials should be avoided.

3.2.4 Front porches should be designed to be usable with a minimum depth of 6'.

3.2.5 Balconies should maximize privacy, add to the interior openness, accentuate views and be functional space.

### 3.3 GARAGES

3.3.1 Garages may be attached or detached. All garages must be consistent and compatible with the architecture and materials of the individual unit. Garage doors should generally be set back from the front elevation at least 4' and be equipped with garage door openers.

3.3.2 The appearance of attached garages should be minimized by limiting garage doors to no more than 50 percent of the linear front elevation of any unit. The use of two single-car garage doors as opposed to a double-garage door or similar design approaches is encouraged to reduce the visual scale of the garage.

3.3.3 Detached garages shall not exceed a maximum height of 16' to the peak of the roof and should be located no closer than 3' to any property line.

## 4.0 NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

### 4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

New small-lot, single-family developments should be integrated with existing neighborhood patterns with respect to building scale, massing and orientations. Each new development should contribute high-quality design and significant landscaping to the neighborhood. Primary common access streets or driveways, which also serve as the pedestrian entrance to the development, should resemble a traditional residential street with front door landscaping for each unit. Garages and automobile-dedicated areas should play a subsidiary role.

### 4.2 RELATIONSHIP TO THE STREET

Along the public street frontage, small-lot, single-family homes should face the street and enhance the appearance of

the adjoining neighborhood. Facade articulation and building placement should reflect the rhythm of nearby residential areas, which may require innovative building design in order to be compatible with surrounding apartment or townhouse units. The backs of homes and opaque privacy fences should not face the street.

### 4.3 DRIVEWAYS AND STREETS

4.3.1 Driveway cuts on the public street should be minimized to preserve landscaping and on-street parking.

4.3.2 The minimum width for a common driveway is 20'. The Zoning Administrator may require wider driveways or streets, depending on the size of the project, the development pattern and the relationship to adjoining properties.



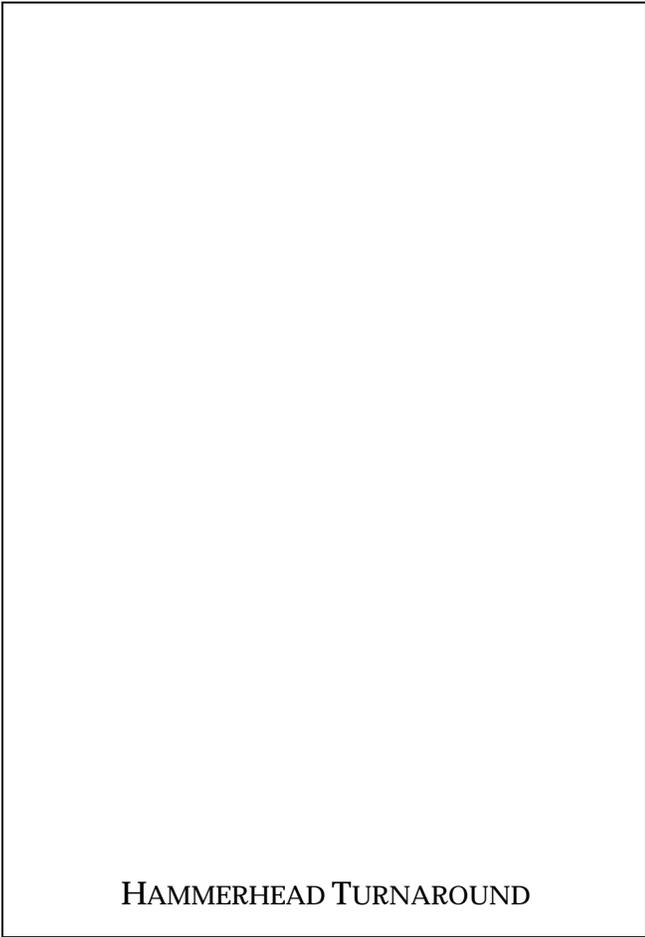
4.3.3 For long driveways, alleys or private streets, a wider pavement width and turnaround area may be required for fire protection.

4.3.4 Projects with dead-end private streets or common driveways longer than 150' are required to have a cul-de-sac turnaround or an "L"-shaped hammerhead turnaround in compliance with Fire Department regulations. The hammerhead turnaround must be acceptable to the Fire Department and be designed for safe, easy maneuvers and to be kept free of unauthorized parked cars (see illustrations).

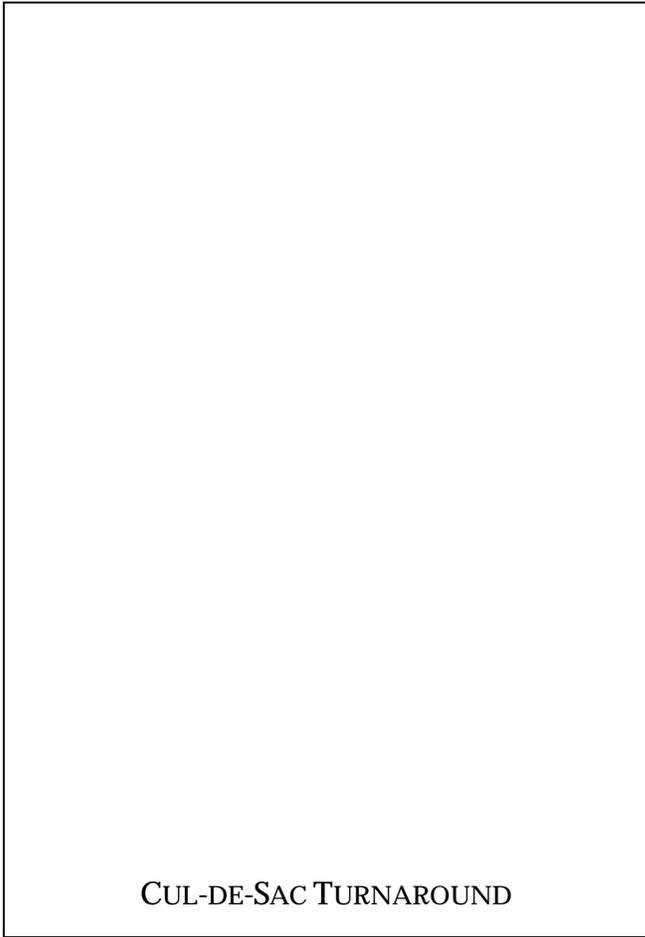
4.3.5 Single-loaded, straight driveways that are perpendicular to the public street should be avoided. These single-loaded driveways may be allowed if significant additional landscaping is provided along the driveway and special design features are incorporated at the terminus as a focal point.

4.3.6 Garages and auto-dedicated areas such as guest parking spaces generally should not be located at the terminus of a driveway or street unless they have exceptional architectural style and features, and, in the case of open parking, ample screening is provided.

#### TURNAROUNDS FOR SMALL-LOT, SINGLE-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



HAMMERHEAD TURNAROUND



CUL-DE-SAC TURNAROUND

## 5.0 LANDSCAPING

### 5.1 LANDSCAPE SETBACKS

5.1.1 A minimum of 10' of landscaping should be provided between the front elevation of each unit and the common access drive or street, as measured from the edge of pavement or sidewalk. Paths or walkways to individual front doors may occur in this area but only if the dominant amount of area remains available to support significant landscaping. Porches, bay windows and similar architectural projections may encroach into this area as specified in the setbacks section. Removal or major trimming of a Heritage tree requires approval from the same body that approves the project.

5.1.2 Units facing the public right-of-way should have a minimum of 15' of landscaping.

### 5.2 MINIMUM LANDSCAPE AREAS

5.2.1 At a minimum, 45 percent of the total site area must be in open area, primarily landscaping. No landscape strip or tree pocket less than 25 square feet should be counted toward the open area requirement. Utilities may occur within the landscaped areas but only if underground utilities will not preclude appropriate planting, including trees, and only if utilities are appropriately screened.

5.2.2 A maximum of 50 percent of any private yard area may be covered with an open patio or decking.

### 5.3 HERITAGE TREE PRESERVATION

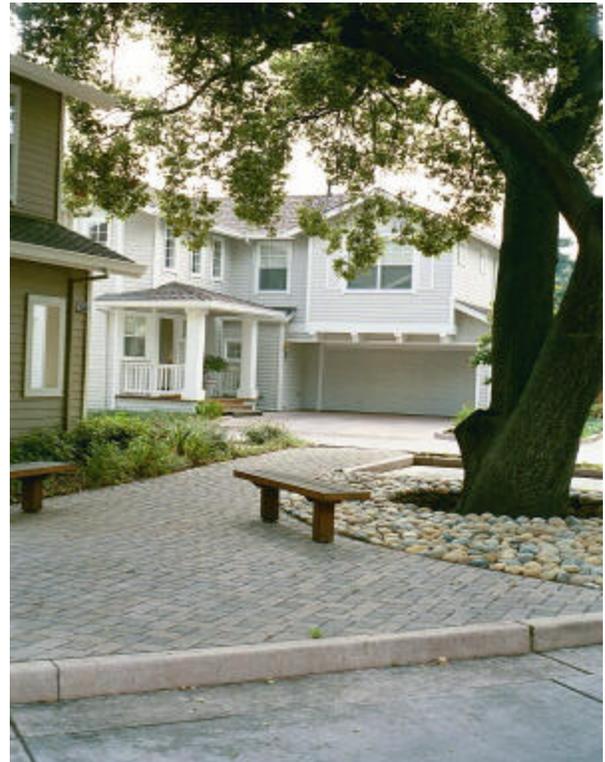
5.3.1 New small-lot, single-family development should be designed to

preserve existing Heritage trees and other major landscaping.

5.3.2 Removal or major trimming of a Heritage tree requires approval from the same body that approves the project.

### 5.4 STREET TREES

5.4.1 To provide shade and unify the neighborhood, at least one tree per unit front should be provided.



5.4.2 Street trees should be provided in small-lot, single-family projects that have private streets and sidewalks.

5.4.3 Required trees in the front of the units and street trees should be maintained for the life of the project. To ensure

proper care, the CC&Rs for the project tree selection and who is responsible for replacement.

5.4.4 Publicly visible open space should be designed and approved as part of the project approval and maintained for the life of the project by the homeowners association or by maintenance easement agreements.

## 5.5 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Landscape plans should incorporate seasonal variety and color to the extent possible. Tall evergreen trees should be used for screening and deciduous trees used where summer shading and winter solar access are needed.

## 5.6 PARKING AND CIRCULATION AREAS

5.6.1 High-canopy tree cover and evergreen trees should be provided in all automobile circulation and parking areas. Canopy trees should be provided every 25' in parking and circulation areas. A minimum of 5' of landscaping (excluding vehicle overhang) should be provided adjacent to open uncovered parking areas and driveways.

should specify standards for maintenance,  
5.6.2 Sidewalks within the development should be tree-lined whenever possible.

## 5.7 DROUGHT TOLERANCE

Drought-tolerant landscaping and water-conserving irrigation methods are strongly encouraged.

## 5.8 LIGHTING

Landscape plans should include provisions for lighting on-site and along public street frontages. Lighting should be adequate to assure safety and visibility in common areas. Post-top-mounted lights are recommended but should not produce glare or be of an intensity inappropriate for a residential environment.

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